

# **The pronunciation of English**

András Cser

BBNAN-11700, seminar

# **Quiz on vowels next week!**

Breaking, Broadening,  
Tenseness/Laxness

# Preliminaries to stress

- Light vs. heavy syllables
  - Light: at most VC (*get, split, begin*)
  - Heavy: anything longer (*react, go, afraid*)
- Stress counted from end of word!
  - *detáin, Japanése* same pattern!
  - *cínema, acádemy, papyrólogy* same pattern!

# Degrees of stress

- Stressed syllable:  
louder, more prominent
  - *contain, people*
  - *indivisibility*
- If more than one, last is primary (main), others secondary
  - *indivisi**li**ty*
  - *Jap**ANESE***
- Unstressed syllable
  - *contain, people*
  - *indivisibility*
- Tertiary stress:  
unreduced vowel
  - *proton vs. button*

# Degrees of stress

- Here we distinguish only primary (=main), secondary and unstressed

- Marking:

– primary:      á      1      ['X]

– secondary:    à      2      [ˌX]

– unstressed:   a      0      [X]

e.g. *Jàpanése* (201), *ìndivìsibíity* (2020100)

/ˌdʒæpəˈniːz/    /ˌɪndɪˌvɪzɪˈbɪləti/

# Two basic rules

- Early Stress Requirement: no English word begins with two unstressed syllables
  - *pósitve* → *pòsitivístic*; *Japán* → *Jàpanése*
- Stress Clash Avoidance: stresses preferably separated by unstressed syll.
  - see all earlier examples
  - rare exceptions: *prìncéss*, *Chìnése*, *thirtéen...*

# Handout 1

# Secondary stress

If primary stress is too far away from the beginning of the word, a secondary stress must appear somewhere before it (cf. ESR):

*jústify* → *jùstificátion*

*assóciate* → *assòciátion*

*refórm* → *rèformátion*



# Two types of secondary stress

Derivational: 2 appears  
where 1 was

Iambic: 2 shifts left  
(Stress Clash Av.!)

jústify  
jústificátion

refórm  
←  
rèformátion

assóciate  
assòciátion

acádemy  
←  
àcadémic

# Handout 2